

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

### RECOGNIZING VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY'S HONORS COLLEGE

#### HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 3, 2015*

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC). For the past 50 years, the NCHC has been committed to excellence in honors education.

In particular, I rise to honor Valparaiso University's honors college, Christ College, an NCHC member located in Indiana's First Congressional District, for its commitment to teaching America's finest students. Dedicated to the cultivation of intellectual, moral, and spiritual virtues, Christ College seeks to emphasize history, literature, art, philosophy, and religious studies. Small discussion-centered classes offer stimulating interdisciplinary study with master teacher-scholars appointed full-time to the honors college. The students enrolled in the honors program not only take rigorous honors coursework, but are concurrently enrolled in one of Valparaiso University's other excellent colleges from which they earn their degrees.

Prominent Christ College alumni include federal district court judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer, class of 1976, and the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Energy Resources, Mary Burce Warlick. These outstanding examples, and the many other successful alumni of the honors program, are a testament to the dedication that Valparaiso University's Christ College has towards its students.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating the National Collegiate Honors Council on its 50th anniversary and in recognizing the exemplary commitment to education at Christ College. For its passionate dedication to the institute of education, the NCHC and Christ College are worthy of the highest praise. Founded in 1859, Valparaiso University has been a true asset to Northwest Indiana since its inception, and its faculty, staff, and students are a source of pride for the First Congressional District.

### CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

SPEECH OF

#### HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 2, 2015*

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud member of the Congressional Black Caucus to participate in this special order hour on "Saving Our Communities" and to discuss how we can work together to address the militarization of law enforcement, the high rate of arrest of our African American youth in our

school systems, and the importance of criminal justice reform.

First, let me thank my colleague Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY, for organizing this special order and for her continued leadership on so many issues, especially as chair of the CBC's Health Braintrust. Her leadership is so critical for these important discussions.

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about our broken criminal justice system and how its institutional biases overwhelmingly and negatively affect African Americans. Black bodies are criminalized, our police forces are becoming more and more militarized and we see astronomical arrest rates amongst African American youth.

From the East Bay to New York City, we see a common story of African Americans living in a different version of America. Their version is one filled with fear, distrust, and vicious cycles of incarceration, unemployment, poverty and recidivism.

Mass incarceration and a lack of reintegration policies have greatly hurt African American communities and I am frankly tired of waiting for "the people's" house to act.

For too long, we have ignored issues affecting African American communities. It is time to do the good work needed to save our communities. Let's pass criminal justice reform, end the militarization of our police forces, and work so that no student will have to go through what that young woman in South Carolina went through.

I applaud the President for his announcement today, and his bold and continued leadership to advance criminal justice reform. Yet much work remains to be done.

The cycle of incarceration and recidivism start early for African American students. The school to prison pipeline is very real and it pushes young people into prisons before they even have a chance.

While black students represent just 18 percent of preschool enrollment, they account for 42 percent of preschool student expulsions. We are talking about kids that are 2-5 years old—these kids don't even get a start, let alone a head start.

This carries over to high-school. Look at the incident at Spring Valley High school in South Carolina—it speaks to issues around black criminalization and the unnecessary escalation of discipline for African American students.

Having a phone out in class does not warrant a police call, and it certainly does not justify a student—a child, really—from being thrown out of a chair and dragged across a classroom floor.

Yet we see today that young African American girls are disciplined 10.5 times more than their white counterparts. Black girls are expelled and suspended at higher rates as well—what is going on?

We live in a country where black and brown youth are punished more often and more severely than their white counterparts. Yet few seem to raise an eyebrow at these gross disparities—disparities that have landed thousands of young people in jail, without hope and without a future.

As the mother of black men and the grandmother of two black boys, I find statistics like that troubling. For African Americans, we have allowed our school system to be turned into a prison pipeline. We must act now to stop it.

The sad thing about the Spring Valley incident is that this is not the first time we have seen students be brutalized at school. And while I commend the police department for firing this out of line officer and applaud the Justice Department for investigating, more must be done to prevent these miscarriages of justice.

We must address the systemic issues facing our education and criminal justice systems.

Nationwide, our local police forces have become increasingly militarized. Images from the unrest in Ferguson caused an outcry as we saw citizens being repelled by police officers in tanks. It looked like a scene from a battlefield than the streets of a suburban Missouri town.

For too long excess military equipment has been sent to local jurisdictions with the obligation to use them within one year. Weapons of war have no place on Main Street.

That is why I am a proud co-sponsor of the Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act (H.R. 1232) a bipartisan bill that reins in the transfer of military equipment to civilian law enforcement agencies.

Instead of finding ways to arm our police forces, let's find ways to provide them with greater racial sensitivity training and work to build greater trust between law enforcement and the communities in which they serve.

That is why I introduced H. Res. 262, a resolution supporting community-oriented policing and encouraging greater diversity in law enforcement hiring and retention.

Our local law enforcement agencies must reflect the communities they serve.

Finally Mr. Speaker, it is past time that we tackle criminal justice reform. The President made some bold announcements today but Congress must act.

Let us ban the box, implement policies that increase integration, and address issues of income inequality and poverty that keep too many people and families trapped in a cycle of mass incarceration, unemployment, poverty and recidivism.

Systemic and institutional racial biases have broken our criminal justice system and eroded trust between law enforcement and the communities that they serve.

Thoughtful criminal justice reform is what is necessary to mend these relationships and work to "save our community" from the inside and out.

I am proud to be a member of the CBC's Ferguson Task Force that is putting forth real, actionable legislation that should come forward for an immediate vote—

Legislation like the Police Accountability Act (H.R. 1102) and the Grand Jury Reform Act (H.R. 429, which together would ensure that deadly force cases are heard by a judge and ensure police accountability by expanding the DOJ's power to persecute cases.

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